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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 004024

SIPDIS

FOR NEA, NEA/ELA
NSC STAFF FOR POUNDS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/26/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: GAMAL MUBARAK AIDE ON REFERENDUM VIOLENCE

REF: CAIRO 4005

Classified by Acting DCM Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) ECPO Counselor raised the negative consequences of the GOE's handling of violent incidents during Egypt's May 25 constitutional amendment referendum (reftel) with Karim Haggag, a close aide to Gamal Mubarak, presidential son and chair of the ruling National Democratic Party's (NDP) Policies Committee. Counselor stressed that the violent intimidation of protestors and journalists during the referendum was contrary to basic principles of free elections and the GOE's own stated goal of political reform. Counselor stressed that the failure of security forces to protect journalists and to prevent violence between NDP supporters and opposition demonstrators boded ill for the campaign ahead.

2. (C) Haggag readily acknowledged that the incidents were "ugly" and "extremely unfortunate" and said he would pass U.S. concerns to Gamal Mubarak and other NDP leaders. He said the he and others had urged the NDP not to hold counter-demonstrations in reaction to the "Kifaya" movement's protests precisely because of the potential for violence. At the same time, Haggag complained that press reports had left the impression that beatings of protestors and journalists had been widespread throughout Egypt when in fact violence had been limited to only a few incidents. Haggag did not respond when Counselor expressed hope that the day's events would convince the NDP leadership to rein in the party's cadres.

3. (C) Comment: Haggag's response to the events was no surprise, given that he and his boss represent the reform-minded among the NDP leadership. It is not clear, however, if they will be able to persuade the NDP old guard to restrain the party's more volatile elements. End comment.

4. (SBU) Post will continue to make our concerns known to other senior Egyptian officials.

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GRAY